United Nations A/C.2/55/SR.4

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
9 October 2000

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 4th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 2 October 2000, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Niculescu ..... (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Krokhmal** (Ukraine) said that although there had been strong growth rates in the world economy since the autumn of 1998, many transition economies remained highly vulnerable.

2. Despite the unfavourable external environment, the economic situation in Ukraine had shown clear signs of macroeconomic stabilization. Thanks to the new policy adopted by the Government, the gross national product and real income had increased in the first half of the year 2000. Comprehensive reform of the tax and budgetary system, as well as administrative reform, were needed to preserve those gains.

3. The reforms were also evidence that closer international cooperation was imperative to promote a fair multilateral trading system and a favourable economic environment. Removing Ukraine from the list of non-market economies in the anti-dumping legislation of the European Union and the accession of Ukraine to the World Trade Organization would be mutually supportive actions.

4. Regional economic cooperation was important, as it provided the link between the global and national economic systems. Relations with the European Union, and cooperation within the framework of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and the GUUAM group consisting of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova, were of utmost significance for Ukraine.

5. A priority task of the Ukrainian Government was integration with the European Union. The recently held fourth Ukraine-European Union summit marked an important stage in relations with the European Union. His Government appreciated the assistance of the European Union in reforming the economy, as well as in decommissioning the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and dealing with the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster. It was grateful to the member States of the European Union and other countries which had pledged over 300 million dollars of additional funding to transform the "shelter" facility into an environmentally safe system.

6. In view of the forthcoming 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, his delegation wished to reiterate the need to accelerate comprehensive implementation of Agenda 21 and to take urgent and effective steps towards adoption and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol; full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity; provision of financial resources and promotion of transfer of environmentally sound technologies to the developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

7. Ukraine fully recognized its responsibility for environmental protection at both national and international levels and would spare no effort to achieve the aims of Agenda 21. Regional cooperation in that area should be strengthened. His country paid considerable attention to the "Environment for Europe" process. The fifth ministerial conference in the framework of that process, to be held in Kiev in 2002, should contribute to regional ecological development and also create prerequisites for the new ethics of global biological resources governance.

8. Environmental issues were an integral part of people-centred development. Sustainable management and conservation of the environment was a key element in Ukraine's domestic and foreign policies. However, success depended on the participation of the public in the decision-making process. Non-governmental organizations and other non-state actors should be given full opportunities to make their contribution.

9. He shared the profound concern of previous speakers at the great disparity in access to the Internet. In order to bridge the information and knowledge divide, the benefits of information and computer technology (ICT) should be made available to all. The United Nations could take the lead in creating the framework for ICT development cooperation.

10. Another major challenge was the problem of HIV/AIDS. AIDS had become a global epidemic with enormous human and social ramifications that threatened the goals of sustainable development. The United Nations should elaborate a comprehensive agenda for action.

11. **Mr. Lavrov** (Russian Federation) said that the depth and scale of socio-economic and environmental protection problems facing humanity required innovative approaches.

12. While it was necessary to take into account the accelerating and rather controversial process of globalization, it must be recognized that globalization

could also exacerbate existing problems, and aggravate the differences between countries. It had been accurately compared to a moving train that could be safely boarded only from a suitable platform. The United Nations should complement national efforts to build such "platforms" as soon as possible. Efforts to resolve social and economic problems should be intensified, with a particular focus on national plans of action eliminating the "digital divide", establishing "new-technology-friendly" legal and regulatory frameworks, and the comprehensive development of human potential through the promotion of universal computer literacy.

13. As the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had pointed out, information and communication technologies (ICT) could serve as a driving force to bridge the gap in levels of development by "skipping" several traditional stages of development. The theme of ICT, with a focus on ensuring equitable access, should find its due place among the priorities of the United Nations.

14. Member States should unite their efforts to ensure that the process of globalization preserved the intellectual and cultural heritage of mankind, while at the same time preventing the potential of globalization from being used for narrow selfish interests or for criminal purposes.

15. In that context, it was clear that poverty was the main obstacle to sustainable development. In that field, the operational agencies of the United Nations had unique potential and experience. The international community must take steps to counter poverty through more effective use of the capacity of the United Nations. The recent ministerial conference of the United Nations Development Programme had been a step in the right direction.

16. While some progress had been made towards strengthening global financial mechanisms after the 1997-1998 financial crisis, a number of objectives had yet to be achieved, the chief among them being improvement of the mechanisms for early warning and prevention of financial crises. The United Nations could play a substantial role in that area.

17. The achievement of sustainable development on a global scale remained one of the most serious challenges of the new millennium. His Government therefore attached great importance to the work to enhance complementarity among the major environmental conventions.

18. Humanitarian issues likewise remained a priority for United Nations activities. The idea of "humanitarian intervention" was in conflict with the underlying principles of such activities, namely, neutrality, impartiality and humanity. The Millennium Summit had once again confirmed that the overwhelming majority of the international community rejected that concept, which was destructive for the entire system of international relations.

19. It was important to strengthen coordination of humanitarian aspects of the work of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations. The implementation of the new comprehensive framework of political, humanitarian, and human rights, and economic collaboration in post-conflict peace-building would make it possible to move to a qualitatively new level of international cooperation in the humanitarian sphere.

20. Given the increase in the number and scale of natural and technological disasters it was essential to increase international cooperation in that area. His Government was prepared to contribute from its experience. The United Nations should make an inventory of the existing capacities available at country, regional and international levels, and prepare recommendations on that basis.

21. The world economy was increasingly acquiring the character of a single organism with its normal life directly depending on the well-being of its parts. The United Nations could play an important role in seeking answers to vital questions for countries with economies in transition — how best to develop positive trends at the concluding phase of transition, how to support economic growth, how to include those countries fully in the information and communication revolution.

22. **Mr. Yépez** (Ecuador) said that since globalization could not be avoided it must be turned to account, if possible. To date, its impact on the developing countries had been largely negative. He hoped that the high-level conference on financing for development which was to be held in 2001, would yield solutions to current problems relating inter alia to trade, investment, and foreign debt.

23. Ecuador itself was currently experiencing serious economic difficulties. While the recent dollarization had begun to produce effects, debt service still devoured over half the national budget, with resultant adverse impacts on health care, education and the environment.

24. His delegation would like to see the strengthening of the Andean Community, closer relations between it and MERCOSUR, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the Pacific basin, and a free trade area for the Americas. A multilateral system of trade with clear rules was highly desirable, and in that connection, a new round of trade negotiations should be organized to eliminate protectionism and guarantee access to world markets for developing countries' products. Trade liberalization should benefit all parties.

25. Development cooperation aimed at poverty alleviation was an essential part of his country's policy. While a member of the UNDP Executive Board his delegation would support strengthening national capacity and would also strive to reverse the decline in official development assistance.

26. The United Nations had an important role to play in the areas of environmental protection and natural disaster mitigation. In that connection, the Government of Ecuador, with the support of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, would shortly be proceeding with the establishment of an international centre in Guayaquil for investigation of the El Niño phenomenon.

27. **Mr. Ling** (Belarus) said that, in the modern world, every country, small or large, economically weak or strong, was affected by globalization and the lack of regulation in the world trade and economic system. His delegation therefore called for further strengthening of the system of international relations, and for a policy of cooperation and partnership such that every participant in the international economy would bear a real responsibility to the world community for observing international norms of law, and respect for the national economic interests of all countries without exception.

28. It was clear that successful integration of the developing countries and countries with economies in transition into the world trading system would be facilitated if a new consensus were reached on mutually acceptable principles for closer integration of those States in the globalizing world economy. Those principles should be included in all future economic and financial negotiations, as well as in United Nations development and integration programmes.

29. Although the countries which were actively reorienting their economies in keeping with market principles were offering broad access to their markets for foreign companies, including multinational and global companies from the industrially developed nations, a responding offer of access to the internal markets of those larger States was more often the exception than the rule. In that context, he welcomed the recent appeal by the new Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, to the leading developed countries, to carry out their structural reforms in such a way that globalization would work in the interests of all.

30. Reducing the risks of globalization, ensuring economic growth and sustainable development, solving problems of debt and mutual access to markets, eliminating the "digital divide" between developed and developing countries — those and other agreed priorities should be integrated into a programme of action for the entire United Nations system. His delegation supported the consolidated approach of the new United Nations international development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium.

31. The political will for a new partnership in the twenty-first century would be tested by the efforts to achieve a new consensus on inter alia the future and "architecture" of the international financial system and achievement of the aims of the new international development strategy.

32. He welcomed the first results of the intergovernmental negotiations called for in General Assembly resolution 54/196 and, in particular, the preliminary agreement on the agenda for a high-level intergovernmental meeting in 2001 on issues of development financing.

33. **Mr. Amaziane** (Morocco) said that the extraordinary progress of information and communication technology had spurred globalization and interdependence. The progressive integration of national economies could lead to a new age of shared growth and prosperity, provided determined action was taken to eliminate poverty and flagrant inequality throughout the world. At present, inequality was actually growing: while a billion people lived on less than one dollar a day, the income of the world's three

richest individuals exceeded the gross domestic product (GDP) of the 48 poorest countries. Access to health care, scientific and technical development and investment was similarly unbalanced. Concerted action was required to find solutions that would safeguard human dignity.

34. Africa, the cradle of humanity, was particularly sorely afflicted by war, diseases such as AIDS and malaria, and poverty. Furthermore, owing to lack of investment, trade barriers and the burden of foreign debt, the countries concerned were unable to escape from their situation. Declining flows of official development assistance were making matters worse.

35. The way forward lay through the progressive institution, at the national and international levels, of socio-economic and political systems based on good governance, equity and solidarity, to offset the disparities and inequalities resulting from the play of market forces. The existing situation tended to encourage and foster extremists of every kind, whereas freedom and prosperity would have the reverse effect. International society should be governed by fair rules that would protect weaker nations by allowing their voices to be heard and would take their vital economic interests into account, including, in particular, their right to a decent standard of living.

36. The United Nations had been founded to eliminate war, fear and want, and consequently had a crucial role to play in fostering, through dialogue, the emergence of an international society free from poverty and flagrant inequality, one, moreover, that embraced cultural differences as enriching, rather than trying to eradicate them as though they were handicaps. The establishment of such an international society was the means of avoiding future crises.

37. **Mr. Al-Dhaheri** (United Arab Emirates) said that since economic security was crucial to world stability and growth, the international community should devise a new economic strategy that accommodated the characteristics of individual countries and local and regional priorities. The problems besetting developing countries — population growth, economic disparities, foreign debt, capital flight, barriers to technology transfer — called for creative solutions backed by the industrialized countries. His delegation supported the strengthening of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and wished to associate itself with the remarks that had been made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

38. The elimination of barriers to international trade was potentially a good thing for all. However, larger flows of official development assistance would help the poorer countries implement economic and social development projects and promote recovery from the ravages of armed conflict or natural disaster.

39. In that connection, it was distressing to observe the economic and social impact of the illegitimate Israeli occupation, with its confiscation of land and usurpation of water and other natural resources, on the Palestinian people. The occupation was a clear violation of international law, and the international community should compel the Government of Israel to put an end to it.

40. **Mr. Uanivi** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

41. The greatest challenge facing the international community was globalization, which must be made to benefit the entire world. To that end, developing countries' participation in the international economic system must be enhanced by revising the terms of trade and ensuring their meaningful participation in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank decision-making process. The target of 0.7 per cent of the rich northern countries' GNP being used to assist the poor countries of the South must also be met.

42. The vision of SADC members was to create a strong regional economic structure to meet the challenges of industrialization and globalization while improving the living standards of their peoples. Far-reaching economic reforms had been implemented with a view to creating a single economic space based on economic integration and political interaction. The Trade Protocol implemented on 1 September 2000 provided for the elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade and the lowering of tariffs to achieve the free movement of goods and services among SADC member States, the ultimate goal being the establishment of a free trade area by 2008.

43. Although growth rates in the region since 1995 had generally been positive, they remained inadequate for tackling poverty reduction in a comprehensive and

sustainable manner and while the investment climate had improved in the 1990s, foreign direct investment had not matched expectations. Governments and the relevant private sectors in the developed countries must therefore increase foreign direct investment in the region.

44. External debt remained a major problem for SADC countries. Debt cancellation and bilateral debt relief were welcome but had not been effective in reducing the overall debt burden since much of that debt was owed to multilateral institutions. In that context and in light of the decline in official development assistance (ODA), he welcomed the intergovernmental high-level event on financing for development to be held in 2001. Without the allocation of sufficient resources from the developed countries through initiatives such as debt cancellation, increased ODA and technology transfer to the developing countries, underdevelopment in the South would continue. He therefore urgently called upon the developed countries to cancel the debt of the developing world, in particular the least developed countries, and to increase ODA to the developing countries. In that context he welcomed the convening of the third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries scheduled for May 2001 in Brussels and urged all stakeholders to cooperate in preparing that event.

45. The recent summit on HIV/AIDS in Windhoek, Namibia, had noted the establishment of a multisectoral SADC HIV/AIDS technical subcommittee which would develop a strategic framework and programme of action for 2000-2004 as well as the approval by the Council of Ministers of guidelines for negotiating with pharmaceutical companies on the provision of drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS. In that context, he stressed the importance of the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS to be held in 2001.

46. Recognizing the importance of joint action by the international community to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought, all SADC member States had ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD), had instituted regional mechanisms to safeguard the ecological balance of their natural environment and were committed to continuing to work in partnership with the international community. He therefore welcomed the offer by South Africa to host the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

47. Recalling the severe flooding in some countries of the SADC region at the beginning of 2000 he expressed appreciation for the material, technical and financial assistance provided by the international community to supplement regional efforts.

48. **Ms. King** (United States of America) said that Member States had a collective duty to try to advance the physical and spiritual lives of their fellow citizens of the world. Faced with the human tragedy of lives wasted or brutalized, all Member States must agree on the need for rapid and significant change. She therefore wished to raise the sometimes controversial issue of globalization, a process driven primarily by technological advances in transportation and communication. Separations enforced by time and distance had vanished and the world now shared all things both good and bad. Like any process of change, however, globalization would cause some dislocation and those whose economic or social prospects were damaged by that process must not be abandoned. Any attempt to stop such changes or interfere with the fundamental processes of market discipline that kept production efficient and growing would deny the peoples of the world the opportunity for progress and a better future. The benefits accruing to any one country through globalization would depend to a great extent on its economic, political and legal environment. Policies which facilitated investment and trade also facilitated the realization of the benefits of globalization. The challenge for each country was to structure itself so as to maximize globalization's positive impact on its people. Failure to adjust would likely result in long-term marginalization in the international economy.

49. A critical question for the world community was how to bring more of the international economy's benefits to the poorest countries. While primary responsibility remained with the sovereign nations themselves, the world community could play an important facilitating role. For example, one exciting aspect of globalization had been the rapid growth of new technology; biotechnology in particular held enormous promise for increasing yields of food and other crops, while protecting the environment from excess pesticide and fertilizer use. That was potentially

of greatest benefit to developing countries, where most population growth was occurring and where the most capacity-building was needed. Her Government strongly supported the call by the Group of Eight for the sharing of biotechnology and its promise with the developing countries.

50. The best known symbol of globalization was perhaps the Internet, which was revolutionizing commercial transactions and personal communications. In response to a Presidential Directive and in recognition of the positive power for productive change embodied in the Internet, in 1999 her Government had launched the Internet for economic development initiative. Twenty developing countries, over half of them in Africa, currently participated in that initiative and more should be joining shortly.

51. Her Government was committed to assisting developing countries in taking advantage of the promise of globalization. In 1999, Congress had approved two initiatives in order to significantly improve the access of qualified African and Caribbean nations to the United States market and had joined with other developed nations in implementing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt initiative, to ease the debt burden on countries struggling to reform their economies. In that context, her delegation strongly supported preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and would continue to participate actively in the intergovernmental consultative process to draft a results-oriented programme of action.

52. Stressing that there could be no sustainable development without adequate financing, she strongly supported the General Assembly's commitment to hold a high-level event focusing on the important questions of development finance; her delegation would continue to assist in preparations for that event and in discussions with the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) and other stakeholders in order to ensure that the meeting would produce a concrete action-oriented policy framework for development finance.

53. Her Government remained committed to sustainable development and believed that economic growth, social development and environmental protection could and must proceed together to ensure a liveable world for future generations. The following 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) would be an important opportunity to consider both major changes since Rio and ways to advance areas of Agenda 21 where progress had been slow. Her delegation would work with other delegations to ensure that the proceedings were transparent and engaged all stakeholders.

54. She stressed members' continued responsibility to increase the efficiency of the various United Nations bodies working to achieve world progress. The Economic and Social Council, for example, dealt with many crucial economic and development-related challenges and ways must be found to make the Council function better, including further streamlining its subsidiaries and expert bodies to enhance its effectiveness, as well as minor adjustments such as reducing and focusing the number of agenda items considered by the Main Committees.

55. Truly sustainable development required both political stability and appropriate economic and social policies. Each sovereign State bore the primary responsibility for creating a domestic environment which would facilitate the economic growth which made sustainable poverty alleviation possible. The world community, in turn, must work together to achieve a more accessible international trade and investment environment within which reform-minded developing nations could flourish. She looked forward to fruitful discussions with Committee members on how to move forward and achieve that objective.

56. **Mr. Chokhal** (Nepal) noted that the overriding question for the world community was how to eradicate absolute poverty in the developing countries. Although developing countries themselves bore the primary responsibility for poverty reduction and development, an enabling external environment and external resources were also essential. In that connection better terms of trade, improved access to developed country markets and access to modern technology were essential.

57. Various United Nations conferences had stressed the importance of economic growth, job creation, increased opportunity and targeted programmes for the poor and needy in efforts to reduce poverty. Yet in recent years official development assistance had declined, as had contributions to United Nations funds and programmes which provided unconditional assistance to poor countries. He therefore urged

development partners to meet the development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for developing countries as a whole and especially the target of 0.15 per cent of GNP for the poorest countries.

58. The international community must mobilize the necessary resources and create a favourable external climate for achieving the Millennium Summit's goal of reducing poverty by 50 per cent by 2015; he looked forward to the high-level event on financing for development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries as important opportunities to chart a new road map for shared progress. Recalling the burden placed on low-income countries' resources by their external debt, he urged the rich countries to expedite and expand the implementation of debt relief provisions such as the HIPC debt initiative to cover all least developed countries.

59. Globalization had torn down the barriers to markets in developing countries but developed countries had failed to open their markets to products and labour from the South. The provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) must be amended to ensure a level playing field and fair terms of trade for the developing countries, and the least developed countries must have quota- and duty-free access to the markets of developed countries in order to enable them to catch up with the rest of the world. He said the Bretton Woods institutions must be reformed so that developing countries could have a greater voice in shaping their destiny and welcomed the positive response of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to the call for reform.

60. Environmental problems such as the excessive production of greenhouse gases, the depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation, acid rain and the melting of the polar ice caps required international cooperation and he called on the global community to redouble its efforts to implement Agenda 21 as well as the Kyoto Protocol and other international environmental instruments.

61. His Government had instituted economic reforms such as liberalizing both domestic and foreign trade and investment, and was moving towards privatization of public enterprises. It was doing its part and he urged development partners to provide more official development assistance, debt relief, trade concessions and technology transfers. Nepal was a landlocked country whose difficult terrain made trade and transportation costly and therefore required additional support and resources for development and integration into the global economy. Support for the information technology sector, for example, would be one way to circumvent the barriers of geography.

62. South-South cooperation was vital for the development of the poorer countries and their integration into the economic mainstream and he welcomed the convening of the South Summit and expressed the hope that concerted efforts would be made to implement its decisions. There was great potential in regional cooperation among the countries from the South and he called on South Asian countries to put the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) back on track in order to move forward together and bring prosperity to their peoples and earn the place in the world which South Asia collectively deserved.

63. **Mr. Mabilangan** (Philippines) said that although little had changed in the world situation since the general debate held at the previous session, the recent Millennium Summit had resulted in a commitment to reduce by half the number of the world's poor with an income of less than a dollar a day. The commitment to the global environment had also been renewed and discussions held on adapting the Bretton Woods institutions to the new realities of the twenty-first century.

64. The international community must work towards a new international trading and financial architecture more responsive to the needs of the developing world, by ensuring that free trade equalled fair trade. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to eliminate duties on the exports of the least developed countries. It also welcomed the progress towards full implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

65. At the current session, the bulk of preparations for two major development-oriented conferences, the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development, and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, would be completed, and the preparations for the 10-year review of the Earth Summit would begin. Those opportunities for progress and the momentum generated by the Millennium Summit must not be lost. His delegation hoped that all stakeholders in the conference on

financing for development, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, would develop a sense of ownership and would participate fully in the preparations for the event. It must be viewed as a milestone in a dynamic process and not as an end in itself.

66. Finally, the Committee must take a closer look at the process of globalization and how its less attractive effects could be mitigated, including the growing "digital divide". However, it was premature to talk of improving Internet access for the developing world when the majority of mankind had not yet heard a dial tone. The focus should be placed on infrastructure and education as well as on capacity-building, investment and connectivity. Information technology should enhance the development and modernization of basic sectors of the economy.

Organization of work

67. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to express its views on the advisability of participating in a joint meeting with the Trade and Development Board by means of a video-conference as proposed by the Board and to offer any suggestions as to its topic.

68. **Mr. LeGargasson** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union considered any opportunity to strengthen the dialogue between the Committee and the Trade and Development Board as valuable, and thus would welcome the opportunity to participate in such a meeting. The topic proposed by the Board, regional integration, was broad enough to allow participants to link it with their particular interests. More information on the modalities for the proposed meeting would be welcome, however.

69. **Mr. Osio** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that after consultations, the Group had suggested the topic of integrating the least developed countries into the global economy.

70. **Mr. Agona** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) said that, while the suggestions were relevant, the theme for that segment of the Trade and Development Board had been set well in advance and could not be changed. Such meetings had been held on two previous occasions, and the Board had found it to be a highly useful experience.

71. **The Chairman** said that he would hold further consultations with the Bureau and report to the Committee at its next meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.